

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pocahontas School
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 22550 State Route 57 NA ☐ not for publication
city or town Pocahontas NA ☐ vicinity
stat Tennessee code TN county Hardeman code 069 zip code 38061
e _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register

- ☐ removed from the National
Register.

- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Pocahontas School
Name of Property

Hardeman, TN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION-School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK

roof METAL
other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1924-1957

Significant Dates

1924, 1957

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Pocahontas School
Name of Property

Hardeman, TN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3 acres Pocahontas 440 SE

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 3353901 3879622
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____
☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Philip Thomason
organization Thomason and Associates date April 30, 2007
street & number 1907 21st Ave. S. telephone 615-385-4960
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Betty Kay Dysart and Shirley Ann Yancy
street & number 10650 Memphis Arlington Road telephone 877-750-7020
city or town Lakeland state TN zip code 37027

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

DESCRIPTION

The Pocahontas School is located at 22550 State Highway 57 in the Hardeman County community of Pocahontas. Pocahontas is a small community of approximately 200 residents centered on the Southern Railway in the southeast corner of Hardeman County. The school building was constructed to the south of the residential and commercial area of Pocahontas on the southern edge of the town. Located at the southwest corner of State Highway 57 and Pocahontas Road, the school was built on a three-acre lot sold to the Hardeman County Board of Education in 1924. The one story brick building was built in an H-shape that was modified in 1957 with a small addition. Craftsman/Bungalow influence is seen in the battered posts on brick columns and exposed rafter tails. The school is the only building on the nominated three-acre parcel and the surrounding area is composed of post-1955 dwellings on large parcels. A driveway off State Highway 57 leads to the front of the school. Adjacent to the main entrance of the building is an original metal flagpole and at the rear of the school is a large open lot that originally served as the school's ball field and playground. At the rear of the school is a metal pole and pulley system for conveying coal into the school. The school closed in 1967 and has since been used for storage.

The Pocahontas School is a one-story, brick veneer school building designed with the influences of the Craftsman style in 1924. The school was originally built in an H-shape with a central auditorium and flanking wings containing classrooms and a Principal's office. Each wing is 24' in width and 71' in length. The central auditorium section connecting the two wings is 46' in width. The building has a gable roof of original pressed metal shingles, a poured concrete foundation and an exterior of stretcher bond brick. The building faces north and the main façade is composed of two projecting gable roof bays and a central recessed section containing a porch and the main entrance. This façade has a full-width shed roof porch with original tapered wood columns on concrete and brick piers. The porch floor is of concrete and the ceiling is of original beaded board. At the porch eaves are exposed rafter tails.

The main entrance (north façade) has original paired five-panel wood doors and above that are paired three-light transoms. Flanking the main entrance are tri-part, six-over-six original wood sash windows with header course brick sills. Opening onto the porch from the projecting wings are original five-panel doors with three-light transoms. The projecting wings on the main façade have window openings covered with plywood panels but beneath the panels are original paired, nine-over-nine wood sash windows. The windows have header course brick sills and at the roofline of the school building are exposed rafters. In the gable fields on the main façade are rectangular louvered vents.

The east façade of the east wing has four window bays which each contain tri-part nine-over-nine wood sash windows with header course brick sills. The openings have been boarded but the original windows remain in place. The rear (south) façade of the east wing has an original nine-over-nine wood sash window and brick sill. On the west façade of the east wing is an original five-panel wood door and three-light transom. Over the entrance is an original shed roof wood canopy with a metal roof and knee brace brackets.

The rear (south) façade of the auditorium section has two window openings containing original nine-over-nine wood sash windows with brick sills. Each unit originally had four windows, but the westernmost unit is partially obscured by an addition on the west wing.

The west wing of the school has a one-story gable roof addition that extends south and shed roof that extends east of the addition built in 1957. On the east façade of the shed roof addition is a concrete block, shed roof wing containing a water pump and water heater. This concrete block wing has a vertical board door on the south façade and no other fenestration.

The east façade of the 1957 shed roof wing has original paired, six-over-six windows and an entrance with an original solid wood door. In the south bay of this wing is a rectangular metal coal grate and this façade also displays a large brick chimney connecting with the boiler room. The rear (south) façade of the 1957 wing has an original single-light glass and wood door. Over the door is a shed roof metal and wood canopy with knee brace brackets. Also at the rear is a ca. 1970 sliding track metal door and metal track pulley system. In the gable field on the rear façade is a frame louvered vent.

The west façade of the 1957 addition has paired windows of tri-part nine-over-nine wood sash with brick sills. The south bay of the original 1924 façade was partially enclosed with brick in 1957, and six-over-six wood sash windows were added. This façade also has an entrance composed of a single-light glass and wood door added in 1957. This

entrance has a shed roof entry porch, added in 1957, supported by square wood posts. This façade also has three window bays with tri-part nine-over-nine original wood sash windows.

The interior of the Pocahontas School remains remarkably intact and has changed little since it closed in 1967. The building's interior has a concrete floor with a surface of linoleum tile, beaded board walls, and beaded board ceilings. The east and west wings originally contained classrooms and cloakrooms. The cloakrooms are located in the north bays of the wings and retain original shelves and hooks for coats and jackets. The classrooms retain their original open floor plan and chalkboards are extant on most walls. Leading from the hallways into the classrooms are original five-panel wood doors with transoms. The west wing of the school also contains the library/principal's office that is accessed by an original paneled wood door. The library/office has original beaded board walls and ceilings.

The school's auditorium occupies the central section between the two wings and has an original raised stage area along the west wall of the room. Leading into the auditorium from the west wing are original double doors of five-panel wood design. This space also has a linoleum covered concrete floor and walls and ceilings of beaded board. In 1957, a cafeteria and bathrooms were added to the south end of the west wing of the building. The kitchen retains a tile floor added in 1957 and original beaded board walls and ceiling. This space has several storage closets and off the kitchen is the boys' bathroom. The wall between the kitchen and hallway is partially open and was originally used for serving food. The cafeteria room is just south of the kitchen and also has a concrete and tile floor and concrete block walls. Between the kitchen and cafeteria is a rectangular opening for collection of trays and dishes. To the east of the central hallway in the 1957 wing are the girl's bathrooms of concrete block and tile, the boiler room containing the school's furnace and a coal room for coal storage.

In front of the building adjacent to the porch is an original metal flagpole. To the rear of the building is a large open field that was originally used as a ball field and playground. Nothing remains of the former ball field. Adjacent to the southeast corner of the building is a metal pole and pulley added in 1957 that was used to hoist the coal to the grate opening. Both the flagpole and metal pulley are contributing structures to the property.

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Hardeman County, Tennessee

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Pocahontas School is significant under National Register criteria A and C for its significance in Hardeman County education and for its architectural design. The building was constructed in 1924 to serve as the main elementary school for the community of Pocahontas. It served in this capacity for over forty years until it closed in 1967 as part of overall county school consolidation. The building was used for both school and community events. By 1957, the school needed to be enlarged with a kitchen addition. The building was constructed with the influences of the Craftsman style such as its porch with tapered wood posts on brick and concrete piers and exposed rafters at the roofline. The building is also illustrative of the modernization of rural school buildings in the mid-20th century when it was enlarged in 1957 with a modern cafeteria, kitchen and indoor bathrooms. The building retains much of its interior and exterior floor plan and detailing and is a rare example of an early 20th century rural school building in the county retaining integrity. The building is now used for storage and retains much of its original architectural character and design.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The community of Pocahontas was formed following the construction of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad through this section of the county in 1848. Prior to the railroad, the largest settlement in the area was the community of Metamora located one mile to the south on the State Line Road. Metamora was a small community and stagecoach stop on this road in the 1830s and 1840s. With the completion of the railroad, most residents of Metamora moved north to the railroad as commerce and business shifted to Pocahontas. On October 5, 1862 the Battle of Davis Bridge (Davis Bridge Battlefield NR 7/13/98) was fought at Metamora and along the Hatchie River south of Pocahontas. This battle was fought following the defeat of Confederate General Earl Van Dorn's army at Corinth, Mississippi. Van Dorn's attempt to retreat west across the Hatchie River was checked by a Union force sent from the county seat of Bolivar. Van Dorn managed to escape with his army south to Mississippi but not before the engagement resulted in almost 1,000 casualties on both sides.

Following the Civil War, Pocahontas emerged as a prosperous railroad town and was a center of commerce in southeast Hardeman County. In 1867, the community contained several dry goods stores, grocers, and small manufacturers including a carriage shop and cabinetmaker.¹ On February 17, 1871 a tornado struck the community demolishing over two dozen buildings including the train station. Citizens rebuilt and by the 1880s Pocahontas supported several sawmills and lumber companies. Timber in the Hatchie River watershed was cut and transported downriver to Pocahontas from the 1880s to the early 1900s. Companies such as the Pocahontas Lumber Company milled the timber into finished lumber for transport to other markets on the railroad.² Pocahontas continued to be a commercial and milling center of the county into the early 1900s. A post office was established at Pocahontas in 1906 with W.A. Reid serving as the first postmaster.³ The Bank of Pocahontas was established in 1913 and Pocahontas contained several brick and frame stores facing the railroad. A fire in 1913 destroyed several of these buildings but the town quickly rebuilt.

¹ Hardeman County Historical Commission, *Hardeman County Historical Sketches*, (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1979), 30.

² Ibid.

³ Hardeman County APTA Chapter, *Hardeman County, Tennessee, Family History, Volume II*, (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company), 32.

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Hardeman County, Tennessee

In 1899, the Tennessee General Assembly required that each county establish publicly funded secondary education facilities.⁴ As a result, numerous frame school buildings were constructed across Hardeman County by the Board of Education. As Pocahontas grew in the early 20th century, there were increased requests to build a larger elementary school in the community. By the early 1920s, the town had outgrown a frame school near the railroad and the Hardeman County Board of Education began a search for a new school location. On July 21, 1924, a three-acre parcel south of downtown Pocahontas was sold to the Hardeman County Board of Education by R.M. Kennedy for \$375.⁵ This parcel was located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Pocahontas Road and Middleton Road (present-day State Highway 57). This location was at the intersection of the main north-south and east-west roads through Pocahontas and readily accessible for the town's students.

The design of the Pocahontas School followed standardized plans widely used throughout the state and the South in the 1920s. The design and floor plan followed that of a four-teacher school that was widely used for the construction of both white schools and Rosenwald Schools for African Americans. A standardized plan four-teacher school used for Rosenwald Schools was followed for the design of the Pocahontas School.⁶ However the design is also similar to the Plan No. 4 from the 1928 *Rural School Building Plans* by the state's Department of Education. Although the classroom configuration is slightly different, the 1928 plan notes that there should be a concrete foundation, brick siding, and an inset porch. The four teacher school was designed to face north or south only, in order to get correct lighting. This design provided for four classrooms, a central auditorium and a combination library and principal's office. Privies were built adjacent to the school and a well across the road provided water for the students.⁷ In front of the building was a playground with a swing set and slide. At the rear were two basketball courts and a baseball field. The building was originally heated by coal stoves with open windows and transoms providing air circulation in the warm months.

Like much of the rural South, this school was a separate facility for white students and African American students attended school elsewhere. Pocahontas resident Esta Lamberth recalled the early years of the school in an article in the *Middleton Leader* newspaper in 1993. Students walked, rode horses or were transported to the school via a school wagon. The wagon was later supplanted by a school bus that made the rounds of the area. Art, music, chemistry, and drama were all part of the curriculum in addition to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Numerous teachers taught at the school during these decades and during much of the 1930s the principal was John S. McBride. During the Depression, the southwest classroom was remodeled into a kitchen to assist students in need and this lunch service continued during World War II.⁸ Middleton resident Lee McAlpin recalled that the school consistently served vegetable soup and cornbread for lunch while he was a student in the 1940s.⁹

⁴ Carroll Van West, *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History & Culture*, (Nashville: Rutledge Hill Press, 1998), 281-282.

⁵ Hardeman County Deed Book G3, Page 399.

⁶ Alicetyne Turley-Adams, *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932*, (Frankfort, Kentucky: Kentucky Heritage Council), 83.

⁷ Esta Lamberth, "Pocahontas School," *Middleton Leader*, Middleton, Tennessee, May, 1993.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Lee McAlpin, Middleton, Tennessee, Telephone Interview by author, 13 April 2007.

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In addition to serving as the community's elementary school, the building also was the location of numerous community meetings and stage shows. Town meetings and fraternal organizations used the school for social and community gatherings. The auditorium and stage was the location for evening concerts by country music artists such as the Rhodes Family of Memphis. A particular noteworthy event was the concert in 1954 by a young Johnny Cash.¹⁰

During the 1950s, funding for education in Tennessee was increased significantly by the General Assembly resulting the construction and modernization of schools across the state. By the mid-1950s, schools across Hardeman County were upgraded and modernized to provide central heat and indoor bathrooms. In 1957, the Pocahontas School was enlarged with an extension on the south façade. This wing contained a cafeteria and this new wing also provided indoor plumbing and new bathrooms for both boys and girls. A furnace and boiler room was also added along with a room for coal storage. The original coal stoves were removed along with the flues at the roofline.

Following consolidation in 1967, the Pocahontas School was declared surplus property by the Hardeman County Board of Education and sold at public auction on June 8, 1968. The school and its tract of three acres were sold to C.H. Taylor and John W. Hudson for \$6,000.¹¹ After using the building for storage, the property was sold in 1974 to J.B. and Jane Russell of Pocahontas who lived next door to the school.¹² The property is currently owned by their daughters, Kay Dysart and Shirley Ann Yancy and is used for storage. According to County Historian Faye Davidson the Pocahontas School is the only remaining rural school building retaining integrity in Hardeman County.¹³ Ms. Davidson recalls that several other frame and brick four teacher school buildings were constructed in the 1920s in communities such as Grand Junction, Whiteville, and Middleton but none of these are extant. However, the Allen-White School in Whiteville was constructed as an African American training school and, although it has some changes, it was listed in the National Register for its significance in education on November 9, 2005. The Pocahontas School has survived intact due to its continuous use as a storage building for adjacent property owners. Although some window openings have been covered with wood, the overall plan, materials, and design of the building is evident and the building remains in good condition.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Hardeman County Deed Book I4, Page 22.

¹² Hardeman County Deed Book R5, Page 133.

¹³ Faye Davidson, County Historian, Telephone, Interview by author, 12 April, 2007.

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Hardeman County, Tennessee

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Lamberth, Esta. "Pocahontas School." *Middleton Leader*, Middleton, Tennessee, May, 1993.

McAlpin, Lee. Middleton, Tennessee, Telephone Interview by author, 13 April 2007.

Slater, Margaret. "The Evolution of Schoolhouse Architecture in Tennessee." Thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 1987.

Turley-Adams, Alicetyne. *Rosenwald Schools in Kentucky, 1917-1932*. Frankfort, Kentucky: Kentucky Heritage Council, 1997.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Pocahontas School is part of a 93-acre tract designated as Parcel 8 on Hardeman County Tax Map 176. The nominated portion of this parcel consists of three acres. Beginning at a point at the right-of-way along State Route 57, the northern boundary moves east for approximately 200'; then it moves south along the right-of-way of Pocahontas Road for approximately 700' forming the eastern boundary of the property. The southern boundary moves northwest for approximately 300' until it intersects with an imaginary line forming the western boundary; from here the boundary moves north for approximately 400' to the point of the beginning. The boundary encompasses the original three-acre tract purchased in 1924 by the Hardeman County Board of Education.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary for the Pocahontas School includes the entire three-acre parcel that was purchased by the Hardeman County Board of Education in 1924. The property contains the school building (contributing), two associated metal structures (flagpole and coal hoist pulley contributing) and an open field south of the school originally used as a ball field and playground. No features associated with the ball field or playground are visible. The three-acre parcel includes all extant properties associated with the Pocahontas School.

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Hardeman County, Tennessee

Photographs

Pocahontas School, Pocahontas, TN

Photographs by: Thomason and Associates

Date: April 5, 2007

Location of Negatives: TN Historical Commission

North façade, facing southwest
1 of 23

Recessed central bay, porch and main entrance, facing south
2 of 23

Original windows on the main façade, facing south
3 of 23

Entrance leading to the porch from the west wing, facing southwest
4 of 23

Original porch column on the main façade, facing southwest
5 of 23

Rear (south) and east facades of the east wing, view to north
6 of 23

East wing of the school, view to the southwest
7 of 23

West façade of the west wing, facing southeast
8 of 23

West façade, showing cafeteria and kitchen wings, facing southeast
9 of 23

Rear or south façade showing the ca. 1970 added door, facing north
10 of 23

Rear or south façade, view to the north
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View of the east façade of the 1957 wing, view to northwest
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Entrance on the west façade of the east wing, view to northeast
13 of 23

Southeast classroom, view to the north
14 of 23

View of the auditorium towards the stage
15 of 23

View of the auditorium stage
16 of 23

Library and principal's office
17 of 23

Original five-panel interior door
18 of 23

Northeast classroom, view to north
19 of 23

Northeast cloakroom20 of 23

Northwest classroom, view to south
21 of 23

Northwest classroom, view to south
22 of 23

Interior of the cafeteria
23 of 23

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